

The Athenian Mercury :

Saturday, May 9. 1691.

Quest. 1. I have a certain knowledge of a thing that happened not long agoe — A Gentleman having been Robb'd, suspected a Servant of his, who being innocent suspected another, and to be satisfyed, and clear himself, he went to a Sorceress; as he was going, he was met by a Female as he believed, who address'd him thus; I know whether you are going, come along with me, and I will shew you who has robb'd your Master of his Money; the Servant went with her, and she shew'd him the shape of the Thief, with which he was so surpriz'd, that he dyed of the fright in three or four dayes: Query — What is your Opinion of this?

Answ. This comes from the Author of the 44 French Queries; I could wish he had been particular in his Circumstances of time and place, and then the Relation had been very entertaining; but however, because he has made an amends in stating the rest of his ingenious Questions, We Answer, our Opinion is, That 'twas either the Devil himself, who is never idle in such Cases, unless restrain'd by an over-ruling power, or at least some Witch or Female Fauress of the Devil, who receiv'd both Intelligence and Power for the young Man's unhappy information: As to his Death by a Fright, 'tis ordinary, and thus effected: The Object (I mean the strange discovery of the Thief) being represented to his senses, and the senses conveying too great and sudden a Prodigy for the understanding to comprehend, the Heart sympathiz'd, and was oppress'd with the Confusion; now the Heart being the seat of Life, Nature for the preservation of its own frame call'd in the Blood to its assistance, the Circulation of which being either too violent, or not coming soon enough, the whole Frame suffer'd too great a shock for a reparation, Mortality always seizing where irregularities and discomposures of Nature prepare the Object.

Quest. 2. Whether is Hope or Fruition more pleasant?

Answ. The Querist ought to have mention'd the Object of Hope and Fruition, that is, whether the Object is an Entertainment to his Senses or his Reason; but since he has not distinguisht, we'll make a supposition in both. In the first, if he means Beauty, Honour, Preferments, and such like, we need not trouble our selves for Instances, at the dissatisfaction we receive in the Enjoyment of 'em, although in the time of our Expectation we had strange Idea's, unwearied, unpall'd Appetites, which could not be persuad'd by the Experienc'd that all was Fiction, 'till we undeciv'd our selves by a sup-

plantation of better Hopes — If the Querist means, An Enjoyment of a peaceful Breast, a Virtuous Conquest of our Senses, or an accomplishment of such Actions as are the deliberate products of true Reason, the Expectation is like Solomon's Fame, much greater than represented. In the first Instance, Hope is generally more pleasant than Fruition, in the last Fruition is more satisfactory than Hope.

Quest. 3. What is the difference betwixt Time and Eternity?

Answ. 'Twas a great Philosophers Maxime, he that will compare two Bodies, must know 'em both, which also holds in Accidents: The Question is put to a Person that has experienc'd but one, nor that to his own satisfaction, but when he has experienc'd the other (if askt again) he will give an Answer: in the mean time from those darker Idea's he has of Eternity, he says there is infinitely a greater difference than betwixt a drop of Water and the whole Ocean, or betwixt an Unite and the most protracted Multiplication.

Quest. 4. What was the Height, &c. of Babel's Tower?

Answ. This is a Question that must be resolv'd by Tradition and the best Authors, we having no other means left, being not contemporary our selves with that Monument of Confusion: Apollonius Thyanus says, that Nimrod and his Followers design'd it for an Altar to sacrifice Horses to the Sun, they believing that to be a God, because not drown'd, which perhaps might give life to the Persian Worship, who now acknowledge no other God than the Rising Sun. But Isidore, whose Credit is more authentick, and his Narration of it more particular, affirms (as Verstegan quotes out of him) that the Tower was 5174 Paces high, the Bricks wherof it was built were six Inches thick, Eight broad, and a Foot long; Travellers report the Ruines of it remain neer Bagdat to this day, and that it stands like a great Mountain, the Passage up it being Circular, and broad enough for Fields; within are proper Places for Granaries, Stables for their Mules, and other Conveniences for Lodging, but that 'tis now impassable, being over-grown with Briers and Thorns. The first Occasion of its building was design'd to be a Refuge in Case another Flood should happen, which was such a dread to the New World, that they went up on the Hills, and came not down into the Valleys for several hundred Years.

Quest. 5. What places of Scripture or other primitive Authors do Censure Astrology as sinful?

Answ. The Author of the former Questions of this Nature having declin'd the Title of

an Astrologer, tho' not of an Admirer of some Instances he has had in *Horary Questions*, and desiring to have no further Arguments about this Matter, but what are deducible from Sacred Writ — We shall after our Confutation of the Whole Body of Astrology by undeniable Inferences, (Vide Numb. 6.) add such Texts in Sacred Writ as will give the Gentleman his full satisfaction, since the 12 Books of *Aulus Gellius*, *Pererius*, and *Picus Mirandula*, signifie so little to him, tho' they sufficiently confute the first Favourer of it amongst Christians, I mean *Origen* the Schollar of *Plotinus*; the Texts are these, *Deut.* 18. 14, 15. *Isa.* 44. 25, 26. *Isa.* 2. 5, 6. *Zeph.* 1. 5. *Jer.* 10. 2. *Eccles.* 8. 7. & 10. 14. *Isa.* 41. 23. *1 Cor.* 2. 11. *Psal.* 139. 2. *Acts* 19. 19. All which said together, and impartially consider'd, I hope will Proselyte the Querist, and force a Subscription to Truth and our preceding Reasons.

Quest. 6. Whether the Art of Painting Glass is different from what was anciently practised, or whether the Ancient Art is not lost, particularly in the two Colours of red and blue?

Answ. I can upon my own knowledge affirm, that Art not lost, but rather improv'd, having at this time bespoken two Coats of Arms to be anneal'd, upon that great satisfaction that I received in seeing several things so curiously done, and comparing 'em with the Antiquate Paintings, of St. Pauls, which I also am satisfied were such by several good Circumstances. This Art of Painting with the New Invention of Spot Dials, lately known to many of the Gentry of England, is continued at Mr. Wincet's a Glass Painter in Breadstreet near Cheapside, where any Gentleman may be accommodated to his satisfaction, in any anneal'd Draughts or Effigies whatever, and also see some of that Old Glass.

Quest. 7. Whether has Gunpowder or Printing done the greatest Mischief to the World?

Answ. Printing has done more service and disservice too to the World, not only because 'twas prior in acting, but also because its Consequences reach beyond the Effects of Gunpowder. Again, as the Cause is nobler than its Effects, Printing is more prejudicial than Gunpowder, since Gunpowder would be seldom employ'd in any great Execution, if printing did not first raise such disputes and distractions as are the Cause of it.

Quest. 8. What is the difference betwixt a Theorick and Practical Virtue.

Answ. As much as the difference betwixt knowing well and doing well. Parallel to this a late learned Author has observed an unhappy truth, viz. How few are there amongst men that know their Duty, and how few are there amongst those that know, which practise accordingly,

— Video meliora probo,
Deteriora sequor. — being a General Motto.

Quest. 9. How may we convince the Heathen that our God is the true God, and not theirs?

Answ. There are so many Learned Pens have undertaken this Subject, especially that of *Hugo Grotius*, *De veritate Christianae Religionis*, that if it was another Subject, it would favour of presumption to add more; but because no Pen can be barren in this great Truth, I will add something perhaps not generally observed; To obey, to die, or to be changed is inconsistent with the Essence of a Deity: Yet the Sun, Sea, Stars, and all the 30000 Gods that *Hesiod* musters up, have received their appointed Orders in Nature, which have been alter'd, inverted, and sometimes destroy'd by their Author, which we may call God, Nature, or what we please, and this is the God we acknowledge. Again, That an Ox, a Cat, an Onion, &c. (which have been worship'd for Gods) could not appoint their own Being, is certain

from this Reason, That they could not act before they had a Being, and it would be against their Nature to invert, alter, or destroy their own Nature, which confirms the preceding Hypothesis.

Quest. 10. What are the Causes of Winds, and whence do they come, and whither do they go.

Answ. We read that the Heathens pictur'd *Aeolus* the God of Wind, standing at the mouth of a Cave, having a Linnen Garment girt about him, and a Smiths Bellows under his feet; at his right hand stood *Juno* cover'd with a Cloud, putting a Crown upon his head, as having given her Kingdom to him, and on his left-hand stood a Nymph up to the middle in water, which *Juno* gave him to Wife; which Image is very significant of the Nature and Causes of the Winds, viz. that they are the product of water rarified: But we shall reserve a fuller Answer for our new System, and in the mean time referr you to Number 10. about Earthquakes.

Quest. 11. Whether a Stone, Bullet, or other heavy Body, let fall from some high place into a Ship when under sail, will fall in a perpendicular line, or will observe the motion of the Ship, and fall in the same place as it would if the Ship had stood still?

Answ. Every thing tends to its Centre, this is granted on all hands, but how effected we shan't dispute here, designing to reserve the Operations of all the Elements, their Natures and Changes, for an intire System by it self, which shall be added to one of our Volumes; therefore to the Question, Every Body seeking a Centre, and the Air being not the receptacle of ponderous Bodies, (the great Body of the Earth excepted, whose Centre is in itself) either the Terraqueous Globe, or the Ship must be the Centre; but it can't be the Ship no more than any moving Body on the Land, because the Ship it self is dependant, and seeks its Centre, which it would attain if the Water and its own shape did not conspire to keep from it. Now that which seeks a Centre it self, can't be a Natural Centre to any thing else, and for those that pretend matter of fact, and their own Experience, that the Bullet will fall in the same place, whether the Ship moves or stands still, it is an error grounded on the swift falling of the Bullet, as well as the Ships motion, which hinders a true remark for a perpendicular. We shall add one other reason, which will demonstrate the fallacy of this vulgar Error—if the Ship was the Centre for the Bullet, it would follow the Ship, though it had sail'd one hundred Yards before the Bullet began to fall, for a Centre is still the same to a nearer or a farther right line. — An Example is—Two stones hanging in a perpendicular, one of them ten Yards from the Earth, and the other one hundred, they will fall both in one place; now if distance changes not the Nature of a Centre (supposing no intervening Bodies) then a Ship pass'd by a Bullets perpendicular cannot be Central, unless you will have it also Magnetical, which is absurd, because it has not that power when upon the Earth as in Launching.

Advertisements.

If any Person whatever will send in any New Experiment, or curious Instance, which they know to be truth, and matter of fact, circumstantiated with Time and Place, we will insert it in our Mercury; (but we shan't use the Authors Name without his License) and if it wants a Demonstration to the Senders, we will endeavour to find one, for the satisfaction of them as well as of all other Ingenious Enquirers into Natural Speculations.

Our First Volume will be finish'd with a Preface and an Alphabetical Index about the end of this present Month.